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Hon. William E. Russell,
With the compliments of the Author,
Edward P. Clark
A BILL

— TO —

Promote Mendicancy.

**FACTS AND FIGURES SHOWING THAT THE SOUTH DOES
NOT NEED FEDERAL AID FOR HER SCHOOLS.**

[A reprint of editorial articles published in the New York EVENING POST
during the years 1886 and 1887.]

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A pamphlet containing a series of articles against the Blair bill, which had appeared in the New York EVENING POST during the early part of 1886, was published in April of that year, while the measure was pending before the Forty-ninth Congress. As the scheme is now urged upon the Fiftieth Congress, a new edition of the pamphlet has been prepared, which includes a number of additional articles that have appeared in THE EVENING POST during the past year. These articles enforce the original arguments against the bill by further evidence that the South does not need outside aid, and that the agitation of the scheme has done much harm to the cause of education; show that the best-informed friends of negro education, like Gen. Armstrong of Hampton, have now withdrawn their former support of the policy; and illustrate the similar change in Northern sentiment by the severe rebuff which Mr. Blair experienced last summer when he appealed to the Legislature of his own State for endorsement.

A BILL TO PROMOTE MENDICANCY.

Federal Aid to Education.

[From The Evening Post, January 16, 1886.]

The revelations of illiteracy in the South made by the last national census produced a profound impression upon the country. Government in the United States is wielded by millions of voters, and the success of such a system obviously depends upon the intelligence of these voters. Every ignorant ballot is a threat to the community, and government by suffrage, where a majority of those who enjoy the suffrage cannot read the ballots which they cast, violates the very theory upon which our whole system is based.

Yet it was shown in 1880 that in a number of Southern States nearly or quite half of the voters were illiterate. About three-fifths of South Carolina's population are negroes, and 78 per cent. of the male negroes were unable to write their own names, while 16 per cent. of the male whites were as badly off, making 52 per cent. of the whole number of both races. Mississippi, with nearly as large a proportion of negroes, was in almost as alarming a condition, 76 per cent. of her male negroes, and nearly 12 per cent. of her male whites being unable to write, or about 47 per cent. of all her voters. Louisiana's population is almost equally divided between the two races; of her negro voters 80 per cent., and of her white voters 15 per cent., being 47 per cent. of all of both colors, were illiterate. In Alabama the proportion reached 46 per cent., and in Georgia 45, while there was not a single State of the States in the "black belt" where the ratio of ignorant voters was not so large as to justify the most serious apprehensions. Of course such a state of things could not continue permanently without grave danger to the republic.

As they emerged from the destitution in which they were left by the war, and the only less disheartening period of corrupt carpet-bag rule, and consequent race hostility, the Southern States began to develop a public-school system. But the States were still

poor, the mass of ignorance was vast, and progress was slow. It was plausibly urged that the exigency was so pressing that outside assistance must be furnished, and that the Federal Government ought to come to the rescue of the South. The objection that such action would be unconstitutional was to be met by allowing all the States to share in the appropriations, while the expenditure of the largest part in the South was to be insured by making the amount allowed each State depend upon the number of illiterates. These arguments proved effectual to secure the passage by the Senate in the Forty-eighth Congress of what is known as the Blair bill, proposing to appropriate \$77,000,000 during a period of eight years for distribution among the States upon this basis. The bill went through the upper branch by a vote of three to one, 20 Republicans and 13 Democrats supporting the measure, and 9 Democrats and 2 Republicans opposing it; but it was never taken up in the House, and lapsed with the end of the session.

Senator Blair has reintroduced the bill, and another strong effort will be made to secure its enactment in the present Congress. The majority in its favor was so large in the last Senate that there is little question of its passing the upper branch again, and its friends profess confidence that a majority can be secured for it in the House. Not only for its immediate consequences, but also, and much more, for its far-reaching bearing upon the relations of the Federal Government to the States, the proposition is perhaps the most important which will come before the present Congress.

The plea in favor of the bill, as we have said, is plausible, but we believe that it is fallacious, because it takes a short-sighted view of the future. Illiteracy is a bad thing for a community, but it is not the worst thing. It is important for the South that its present ignorance should be dispelled as soon

as possible, but that is not the most important thing for the South. The vital element of any success that is worth achieving in this world is self-reliance. The man who works his own way to an education may not acquire it as soon or get as good an education as one who receives it at the hands of charity, but it will be worth a great deal more to him, and he will be worth a great deal more to the community. The same principle holds as true for the State as for the individual. The American colonies developed into infinitely stronger commonwealths by reason of having to make their own way in the world than they ever could have become by the most fostering care of the mother country.

What was true a hundred years ago is true to-day. Illiteracy in the South is a terrible evil, and its removal will be a vast work. The burden must be a heavy one for the South to bear, and it would be temporarily a great relief to unload a share of it upon the broad shoulders of the general Government. But the education of its coming voters is the first duty of an American commonwealth. It is not the business of the general Government, and nothing could be more demoralizing to a State than the assumption of its own duty, in whole or in part, by the authorities at Washington. Undoubtedly more Southern voters will be able to read eight years hence if the Federal Government expends \$77,000,000 upon Southern schools, but the South can much better afford to have fewer intelligent voters eight years hence than to have purchased their education at the expense of its own self-reliance and self-respect.

The truth is that the Southern States are already proving their capacity to grapple with this problem alone. Take, for example, South Carolina, which was in the most desperate condition. In 1874, under carpet-bag rule, there were only 110,416 pupils in her public schools. In 1884 the number had increased to 185,619. In Mississippi the number of pupils rose from 166,204 in 1876 to 266,996 in 1883. In Florida ten years increased the annual roll of scholars from 20,911 to 58,311. There is not a State where the gain has not been most gratifying. In most commonwealths the percentage of children of the school age who attend school already approaches that in the North—being, for instance, 63 per cent. in South Carolina and only 69 per cent. in Maine—and in some Southern States it even exceeds

the proportion in some Northern States. The defects of the educational system are that the teachers are not so good and the terms not so long as a rule in the South as in the North. But these defects can be overcome by the growing prosperity of the South, which will enable the States to raise more money for their schools. It must be remembered that the South has but just begun to realize the possibilities of her future under freedom. Every year will find her able to do more for education than the year before.

Let not the nation make the fatal mistake of teaching the South to depend upon the Federal Government for the maintenance of her schools, and thus to lose that quality of self-reliance which no amount of education to short order can make up for. The best friends of the South are those Southerners who recognize the folly of this short-sighted policy. The North feels generously toward the South; it is in danger of yielding hastily to its first impulse in this matter. The most effective opposition can be made by Southern men who base their opposition upon the right ground. Ex-Gov. Chamberlain of South Carolina, who himself stoutly opposes the Blair bill, not only for its unconstitutionality, but also for its wrong principle, quotes the words of one such Southerner, an ex-slaveholder and ex-Confederate soldier, who puts the strongest argument against the Blair bill in this most forcible style:

You know my deep interest in the public-school system. Hence I am opposed to national aid. You cannot *plaster* the South with this system. It is a growth, and its certain and healthy growth can only be secured by *each community providing for its own schools*. The Blair bill is simply, in another form, the old hallucination, "forty acres and a mule," which has caused more briars and sassafras bushes to grow in Southern fields than all else.

Connecticut's Warning Against the Federal Education Scheme.

[From The Evening Post, February 6, 1886.]

The question of Federal aid to education in the States, with an especial view to overcoming illiteracy at the South, is so important that it merits thorough discussion. The letters that we have received since our recent article, and the comments of other journals upon the views then expressed, justify a recurrence to the subject. The great difficulty hitherto has been that the public has not given much thought to the vital issues involved, most people hastily yielding acquiescence to the scheme upon hearing the plausible surface arguments in its favor; signs of a

disposition to get at the fundamental principles underlying it are therefore welcome.

As we previously remarked, the North feels generously towards the South, and is therefore favorably disposed towards any measure that promises to dispel the cloud of ignorance which has overspread that part of the country. Moreover, many Northern people feel as though the nation was under an obligation to assume a portion of this burden. The *Christian Union* speaks for this class when it says:

An appropriation for education in the Southern States is not a gift of charity; it is the payment of a debt due by justice. The nation shares in the responsibility for slavery. It is wholly responsible for emancipation and enfranchisement. If the South had enfranchised the blacks, we might leave the South to educate them; but in putting the ballot into one hand we obliged ourselves to put the school-book into the other.

It is also urged that the Federal Government virtually rendered educational assistance to the new States in the West by setting apart school lands for them, and that the Southern States, with the ignorance thrust upon them by emancipation, now stand in far more urgent need of assistance from the nation.

All the pleas for Federal aid proceed upon the assumption that such aid will be a good thing for the South. It is this assumption which we combat. We maintain that the worst thing which could befall the cause of education in the South would be a series of liberal appropriations from the national Treasury for a series of years. We mean, of course, the worst thing in the long run, for no judgment upon such a matter is of any value which is not based upon a long look ahead. We are ready to admit that more Southern voters might be able to read eight years hence if \$77,000,000 should be appropriated by Congress for use chiefly in Southern schools than if the States were left to their own resources; but we insist that this temporary gain in intelligence would be purchased at the cost of a permanent loss in character vastly more important—the loss of self-reliance and self-respect.

One fact counts for more than a volume of theorizing, and it is therefore most fortunate that the demoralizing influence of outside school funds can be conclusively demonstrated from the experience of one of the oldest States in the Union. When Connecticut sold her Western Reserve lands, the proceeds were devoted to a school fund, in the expectation that this assistance would serve materially to elevate the standard of public educa-

tion. The fund proved quite productive, the income during the early part of this century varying from \$70,000 to \$100,000 a year, which was a large sum of money for a small State in those days, when the cost of maintaining schools was so much less than now.

Before they had this outside income the people of Connecticut supported their schools entirely by taxation, just as the people of the South are doing now. What was the effect of receiving this assistance? The answer shall be furnished by Mr. C. D. Hine, Secretary of the State Board of Education, who is recognized as an authority in the matters of which he speaks. In response to a request from THE EVENING POST for a succinct statement of the facts, Mr. Hine writes:

The school fund derived from the sale of Western lands yielded an income last year of \$120,855, which amounts to 80 cents for each person of the school age. The average expense of educating each of these persons throughout the State is \$10.81, so that the fund now furnishes about 8 per cent. of the total cost. In those towns and cities where the people insist upon good schools no reliance is placed upon these permanent funds. Indeed, the history of our State shows conclusively that at the time when the fund was most productive, yielding \$1.40 or \$1.50 for each person of the school age, and when towns depended upon it, as they generally did, for the support of their schools, the schools themselves were poor and short. In fact, this was the darkest period of our educational experience. A very striking deterioration took place as soon as the fund became productive, and the income began to be distributed. Before that period schools had been maintained at least six months, and at most nearly the whole year, according to the size of the district. After, and not long after, this new source of income was opened, the usual length of schools was reduced to only three months, or just the time that this fund would maintain the schools. The sums which came as gratuities relieved the people of responsibility and deadened their interest, until the schools were continued only so long as the charity lasted. Happily the danger from this direction is passed, and cannot return. The fund has probably reached its greatest productiveness, and the per capita will constantly decrease. The public schools must draw their sustenance from the people who are directly or indirectly benefited by them.

The Blair bill simply proposes to do for the whole South what the Western Reserve fund did for Connecticut. Human nature is much the same everywhere, and if one were to try differentiating it, he certainly would not find the Southern character less likely to be demoralized by subsidies than the Northern. The men who had this fund set apart for the benefit of Connecticut's schools undoubtedly thought that they were doing the State a great service; but it has proved a curse, and the people are now congratulated that "the danger from this direction is passed," because the growth of population

has forced them to tax themselves in order to educate their children. The *Christian Union* and the people who share its opinion that Federal appropriations for Southern education would be simply "the payment of a debt due by justice" are honest in their desire to benefit the South, but if they could accomplish their design, they would have proved its worst enemies.

The truth is that the South can educate herself, and is already beginning to do so. It will be a hard job, but her people, black and white, will be more manly, more self-reliant—yes, and more intelligent too, in the long run—if they are left to work out their own salvation. The most hopeful sign for the South's future is that clear-headed Southern men are protesting against the efforts of well-meaning but short-sighted Northerners to give the South school money out of the Federal Treasury, which these Southern men see that she ought to raise and can raise herself.

A Bill to Promote Mendicancy.

[From The Evening Post, February 11, 1886.]

Mr. Blair of New Hampshire has succeeded in having his bill for Federal aid to education in the South made the regular order in the Senate, and this most important proposition is thus again before Congress for discussion. At the same time the press of the country manifests signs of giving the subject more careful attention than it has previously received, and there is evidence that many journals which have hastily endorsed the scheme in past years are now weakening in their confidence that it will prove a good thing in the long run. The recent articles in THE EVENING POST, taking ground against the project both upon theoretical considerations of public policy and upon the confessedly bad results of a somewhat similar grant in Connecticut many years ago, have called forth so many expressions of opinion from subscribers and from contemporaries that we revert to the subject as being evidently one in which the public is keenly interested.

The Boston *Herald* is a newspaper which has hitherto favored the Blair bill, in the belief that it would stimulate the cause of common-school education, but which now says, "If it will not, let the aid be withheld," and scarcely conceals a growing doubt whether the scheme would not hinder rather than help. Its chief reason for still hoping that Federal aid to Southern schools might

prove beneficial is based upon certain statements made by a Northern gentleman who has paid much attention to this question, and who strongly advocates the Blair bill. We quote his argument, which is the strongest ever made for the scheme, as summarized by the *Herald*:

Emancipation, the act of the nation, added one-third or more to the school population of the former slave States, and that after two-thirds of the property of that region, reckoning the slaves as part of it, had been destroyed by war. The freedmen and their children had been kept in compulsory ignorance under the authority of the National Constitution, which recognized and protected slavery. It was, therefore, physically impossible for the people of the Southern States to assume the task of educating this mass of ignorance. The Rev. Mr. Mayo, an excellent authority on this question, says that "there are now, in sixteen Southern States, 4,000,000 white and 2,000,000 colored children and youth of school age, of whom not one-third can be said to be in any effective school." Seventy per cent. of the negroes over ten years of age are illiterate, and the ratio of illiteracy for blacks and whites alike is increasing. And this in spite of the fact, to which Mr. Mayo bears testimony, that "no people in human history has made an effort so remarkable, all circumstances considered, as the people of the South have done during the past fifteen years, in what they have already done for the schooling of their children." Last year the Southern States raised no less than \$17,000,000 for school purposes, of which nearly one-third was for the education of the children of their former slaves. In many of the States the school tax is higher in proportion to the property than in Northern States that maintain a splendid school system. And yet more than one-half the children of school age are growing up illiterate, or without primary instruction that is worthy of the name.

When so great weight is attached to the opinion of a man, it is essential to know something about his qualifications to judge as to the wisdom of adopting a far-reaching measure of national policy. The Rev. A. D. Mayo is a gentleman of the highest character, a clergyman of excellent standing in the Unitarian Church, and a lifelong friend of education. Some years ago he abandoned regular church work to devote himself to the cause of education in the South, and in that cause he has labored with great zeal and entire unselfishness. Mr. Mayo has thus enjoyed unusual opportunities for learning the state of things at the South, and he is entitled to be heard with great respect. But, after all, he is that most dangerous of all guides, a man with a hobby. Moreover, it is evident that the influence of his former environment causes him to view Southern schools through glasses which distort the situation. Mr. Mayo lived for a number of years, while his child-

ren were going to school, in Cincinnati, and for a number of years more in Springfield, Mass.—both cities with excellent systems of graded schools—in session nine or ten months out of every twelve. He went down South, and found that in the rural districts the common schools were open only three or four months a year. He was naturally shocked, and jumped to the conclusion that the nation must go to the aid of the Southern States, or their children would never get a decent education. His radical mistake was in supposing that the situation in the rural regions of the South was much different from the situation in the rural regions of the North, or much worse. If he had gone from Springfield through the hill towns of western Massachusetts, he would have found schools which are but little more “effective” than exist in the South and are in session but little longer. Less than 5 per cent. of all the inhabitants above the age of ten years in Maine, New Hampshire, or Vermont, in either 1870 or 1880, were unable to read, and yet the official records show that the average length of the school year between 1860 and 1870 was only 119 days in Vermont, 99 in Maine, and 97 in New Hampshire, while in eight of the sixteen old slave States schools are now open 100 or more days, and in only three States less than 75 days.

When the *Herald* and other believers in Mr. Mayo quote his dictum that not one-third of the children in the South can be said to be in any “effective” school, they must remember that it is the testimony of a man who would undoubtedly have pronounced the schools of twenty or twenty-five years ago in many New England towns ineffective, and yet that those schools kept the ratio of illiteracy in those States below one in twenty. The *Herald* does not make it quite plain whether the statement that “the ratio of illiteracy for blacks and whites alike [in the South] is increasing,” was made by Mr. Mayo or is its own, but whoever its author, it is obviously a gross and inexcusable misrepresentation. The official reports of the Superintendents of Education in every Southern State show that the number of attendants upon the public schools is increasing steadily and largely, year by year, mounting in South Carolina from 110,416 in 1874 to 185,619 in 1884, and in Mississippi from 166,204 to 266,996 in the eight years ending with 1883. If illiteracy is really increasing with such extensions of school advantages,

national aid would only aggravate the evil by enlarging the number of pupils, and the true thing to do would be to shut up the schools. But it is not true, and the census of 1890 will undoubtedly show a great diminution in the illiteracy of every Southern State. It is a scarcely less flagrant misrepresentation to give the impression, as Mr. Mayo does, that “not one-third” of the children in the South are getting a decent education. The truth, as shown by the reports of State Superintendents, is that the percentage of attendance to the whole population of the school age, even in States with so large a negro preponderance as Mississippi and South Carolina, has already reached almost as high a point as in thinly settled States at the North.

There remains only the plea that the schools are not as good as they ought to be, and yet that the Southern people cannot raise any more money for education, so that they must have help from the Federal Treasury if there is to be any further improvement, which everybody concedes is essential. It is a perfectly conclusive answer to this plea of Mr. Mayo's that it is now several years since he began telling the Southern people that they could not raise any more money for schools, and that they have gone on raising more money all this while. For example, South Carolina and Tennessee increased the amount devoted to this purpose between 1880 and 1884 by nearly 33 per cent.; Georgia, Alabama, Missouri, Virginia, and West Virginia, almost 40 per cent.; North Carolina and Florida, 50 per cent.; and Arkansas and Texas, considerably more than 100 per cent.

If anything more were needed to show that the South is capable of “paddling her own canoe,” it is furnished by the voluntary testimony of Southern men who are devoted to the cause of education in those States where the load is heaviest by reason of the large proportion of negroes in the population. In Mississippi almost 60 per cent. of the people are colored, yet this is what Governor Lowry, of Mississippi, said about education in that State in his message to the Legislature last month:

It is a source of no little gratification to be able to state that the common-school system is in a healthier condition, and that the complicated machinery of the department is working more smoothly and satisfactorily than at any previous time in its history. My information from various sources satisfies me that the interest in favor of our system of public education as established and maintained by law is steadily increasing, and assuming a more intelligent and well-defined form of action. I learn

from the able School Superintendent, General Smith, that the attendance of 1884 was largely in excess of that of any previous year, and will, he supposes, be greater for 1885. Especially is this increase marked among the colored people, showing more attention and concern about the education of their children than manifested heretofore. It may be truthfully said that the educational outlook of the State is hopeful, and the object of every one connected with legislation should be to revise, improve, and perfect our school system.

The proportion of negroes to whites is even larger in South Carolina than in Mississippi, nearly two-thirds of all the people being colored, yet Gov. Thompson—himself for years the State's efficient Superintendent of Education, and one of the most devoted friends of public schools in the whole South—was able to make this encouraging showing in his message to the Legislature last November:

The report of the Superintendent of Education shows a most gratifying progress in the work of the public schools, and in the healthy growth of popular sentiment on the subject of education. Year by year the friction that attended the operation of the free public-school system in the earlier period of its establishment has been reduced, and in all particulars controllable by the school officers it has almost disappeared. The number of pupils enrolled in the public schools during the year just closed was 178,023, of which 78,458 were white and 99,565 were colored; the number of teachers employed was 3,773, being an increase of 89 over the number employed during the preceding year; and the number of schools was 3,562, being an increase of 80 over the number in operation during the year 1883-84. The length of the school-term was three and a half months. It was shown in the annual report for 1884 that the limit of ratio of enrolment to the school population of the State had been nearly reached, and that the increase in this respect would, in the absence of unfavorable conditions, only keep pace with the natural increase of population. This indicates that the schools have been brought within the reach of the people and are generally used by them. The average attendance of pupils for the school term shows an increase of 7,949, and has now reached nearly 69 per centum of the enrolment. That this percentage should be so high among a people mainly rural is highly encouraging, because it demonstrates that the work of the schools has become more effective and better appreciated.

We do not see how any candid person, who will take the trouble to investigate the facts, can avoid the conclusion that the work of public education in the South is now in a most hopeful condition, and that the worst thing which could possibly befall the cause would be the assumption by the nation of a burden which the South has shown herself able to carry alone, and will be all the stronger in the end for having carried alone. There was a time when an appeal for national help might have been urged with force. Just after the war, when the South was plunged in poverty, when, as in South Carolina in

1869, not one child in ten attended public schools, it might have been fairly urged that Congress should come to the rescue. But half a generation has passed since that time, and the South, by her own confession, is now able to do the work, and will be able to do it better every year as she grows richer. The short-sighted Northern philanthropists who try to persuade her that she is too poor are her worst enemies. Mr. Blair's bill only needs to be seen in its true light, as a bill to promote mendicancy, and it is sure to be rejected.

How the Bounty System Would Work.

[From The Evening Post, February 13, 1886.]

An attempt is made to break the force of the argument against the Federal education scheme which THE EVENING POST recently drew from the disastrous effects of the Western Reserve Fund upon Connecticut's schools, by the claim that the cases are not parallel. It is said that the aid which Connecticut received was an out-and-out substitute for local taxation, while the Blair bill promises aid only in proportion to the sum which the State raises itself for educational purposes, and therefore that it would stimulate, not lethargize. It is true that under the Blair bill no State can draw more money out of the Federal Treasury for educational purposes in any year than it expended for similar purposes out of its own revenues the previous year; but human nature in the South would prove very unlike human nature elsewhere if the influence of this outside subsidy were not to check the present tendency towards heavier local taxation for the schools. Take, for example, the case of South Carolina, which has the largest proportion of negroes in her population of any State in the Union, and so the heaviest load of ignorance. Her proportion of all the illiterates in the country would entitle her under the Blair bill to \$416,617 from Washington in the first year, \$595,167 the second year, and \$892,751 the third year, from which height the total would sink down to \$297,583 in the eighth year, provided she raised corresponding sums herself—or to such proportions of these sums as would correspond with what she might raise herself. South Carolina expended for schools in the last year \$428,419, and so would be entitled to \$416,617, in the first year under the Blair scheme. The progressive element in the State realizes the necessity of raising still

more money for schools than the present taxes yield, but the old fogies who "don't believe in public schools," the lazy, the shiftless, the constitutional grumblers, and the people who always insist that taxes are too high, think that \$428,000 a year is too much to expend upon education—or, at any rate, too much for the State to raise.

Once let the people know that they can reduce their own school taxes one-half at a single stroke, and yet draw enough from Uncle Sam to have, in all, the \$428,000 a year for schools which is now raised, and the disposition to cease relying on their own resources would inevitably prove as strong in South Carolina now as it proved in the case of the New England people fifty years ago. The men who devoted the Western Reserve fund to school purposes in Connecticut did not intend to make it a substitute for local taxation, but only a supplement of the latter, enabling the people to improve their rude schools, erect more suitable school-houses, employ better teachers, and raise the educational standard generally. Yet the very knowledge that they had an outside income assured operated to make the people unwilling to tax themselves enough to keep the schools as good as they had been when they depended solely upon themselves, and this in a State where popular education was devoutly believed in. The Blair bill says in so many words to the people of South Carolina, "Cut down your school taxes one-half, and the grant to which you are entitled from the Federal Treasury, combined with what you will then raise yourselves, will give you as much money for educational purposes as you have now." The man who, in the light of Connecticut's plain warning, supposes that the easy-going people of South Carolina, or of any other Southern State, will not yield to the temptation which overcame the severe principles of a Puritan community, has a confidence in Southern human nature which may do credit to his heart, but which does not speak well for his head.

Impressive Warnings.

[From The Evening Post, March 1, 1886.]

The EVENING POST has argued that the passage of the Blair bill would inevitably exert a bad influence upon the cause of education in the South. We are now able to present convincing evidence that the mere prospect of the bill's becoming a law has worked harm to Southern schools. In his

annual report submitted to the Legislature in December, 1884, eight months after the Senate passed the Blair bill, Mr. Asbury Coward, Superintendent of Public Education in South Carolina, said that the year just closed had been marked by several circumstances which operated adversely to the advancement of educational affairs, and we call the especial attention of every thoughtful person to the circumstance which he cites as last and most important:

The short and unremunerative crops of 1883, the severity and inclemency of the weather last winter, the delay and difficulty experienced in planting the crops of the current year, the unusual stringency in the circulation of money, which have cramped so generally the business interests of our people, all tended to hinder the work of the public schools. *In addition to these drawbacks, the discussion of the policy of Federal aid for the suppression of illiteracy revived into active expression all the latent or hitherto silent opposition to the common-school system of the State.*

There is even more startling evidence from another State as to the bad influence which the bare prospect of receiving Federal aid has had in the South. To careful observers of Georgia's wonderful material progress during the last few years it has been a mystery that so prosperous a commonwealth did not do more to make her school system worthy of "the Empire State of the South." We have at last discovered the reason. It has been simply because her people had concluded that they were soon going to get liberal appropriations for this purpose from Washington, and consequently did not need to make greater efforts themselves to meet the necessities of the case. So long ago as November, 1882, Mr. Gustavus J. Orr, the State School Commissioner, in his report to the Legislature, condemned "the utter inadequacy of the sums which we are applying to the support of schools to the object to be accomplished"; pointed out "the urgent necessity of more liberal appropriations for schools"; showed that a tax of only one-fifth of one per cent. upon the property of the State would keep the schools in operation six months, nearly twice the period that they were then open; met the former plea of poverty by the declaration that "the time has come when we can do better"; and concluded: "*I am sure that we have reached a point where we can continue our schools in operation for six months [nearly twice the period at that time] without unduly burdening the people.*"

The Legislature failed to act upon Mr. Orr's recommendation. Why? The answer to this question is given in the following let-

ter to THE EVENING POST from Mr. Woodrow Wilson, author of the work on 'Congressional Government' which has attracted so much attention, a native of the South who stoutly opposes the Blair bill, as do so many of the more clear-sighted Southerners:

In the winter of 1882-83 I spent some time in Atlanta, Ga., while the Legislature was in session. The project of Federal aid to education was already then being pushed. One day I dropped into the gallery of the State Senate Chamber for an hour, and chanced to find a discussion in progress upon a proposal to increase the appropriation for education, as Mr. Orr had urged that the State was so abundantly able to do. Only a small minority favored the measure for heavier taxation. The majority supported a counter-resolution that the Senators and Representatives of the State in Congress be requested to do all in their power to secure the passage of a law giving aid from the Federal Treasury to education in the States. I heard one speech made in opposition to this begging resolution. It was a sturdy appeal to the self-respect and independence of Georgians, in view of what the Speaker treated as the unquestioned ability of the State to support a school system worthy of so great and prosperous a commonwealth. No attempt was made by the majority to answer his argument, which, like Mr. Orr's plea, was indeed unanswerable. The majority kept silence, and contented themselves with passing the resolution appealing for outside help to do what by their very silence they confessed they were able to do themselves. It was evident that no increase in the State appropriation for public education would be voted so long as there was the least prospect of aid from Washington. The whole performance impressed me as a shameless declaration, upon the part of a well-to-do community, of its deliberate determination to enjoy the easy position of a beneficiary of the national Government to the fullest possible extent, rather than to be independent and support a good school system by its own unaided efforts.

The morning's mail brings us two more strong proofs that the South does not need any educational appropriations from Washington. There was published at Raleigh on Saturday the annual report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in North Carolina for the last school year. This report shows that there has been an increase over the previous year in the school expenditures of \$51,693, being nearly 10 per cent.; in the number of pupils enrolled, of 13,850; in the average attendance, of 12,588; in the number of school-houses, of 214; and in the length of the school-year, of nearly a week. "Upon the whole," says the Superintendent, "our educational outlook is encouraging in every aspect but one," which is the annulling by the Supreme Court of two statutes relied upon to increase the school revenues, thus requiring an increase in taxation, which so thriving a State can easily stand. We

have also just received the last annual report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in Florida—a State where there are nearly as many negroes as whites, and consequently a heavy burden of black ignorance. The Superintendent reports that the public-school system is in a most prosperous condition, as will readily be believed when he proceeds to show that the number of schools increased during the last year from 1,504 to 1,724; and that "the number of school-children between the ages of six and twenty-one years (which is the school age by law), according to the school census taken in the year 1884, was 66,798, of whom, by the annual reports of the County Superintendents, there are enrolled for attendance upon the schools for the year ending September 30, 1885, 62,327, and in daily average attendance 45,850, a percentage of enrolment and daily attendance equal to any State in the Union as reported from the educational departments."

New England Schools Twenty Years Ago and Southern Schools Now.

[From The Evening Post, March 3, 1886.]

It would be, of course, in the highest degree unjust to expect that the public-school system of the South, in most States hardly established above fifteen years, should yet equal that of New England, where public education has been the rule for generations. The only fair comparison is between the condition of Southern schools now and that of Northern schools at a period say twenty years ago. In order to present such a comparison we have procured from Mr. N. A. Luce, the Superintendent of Common Schools in Maine, a detailed statement of the whole number of children of the school age (between four and twenty-one years), the whole number of these children enrolled, the average length of the school year, and the whole amount expended for common schools for each year beginning with 1860 and ending with 1870. From this statement of Mr. Luce's it appears that the average number of children of the school age for each of these years was 229,614; the average number of these children enrolled in school, 137,410; the average length of the school year, 99 days; and the average school expenditure, \$695,059. That was the record for a New England State less than a quarter of a century ago. To-day there are but few States in the whole South where the propor-

tion of children of the school age attending school is not larger, and in many cases decidedly larger, than the old record of 60 per cent. in Maine, as the 61 per cent. in Tennessee, 63 in South Carolina, 68 in Missouri, 73 in West Virginia, 77 in Delaware, 79 in Texas, and 93 in Florida. Even in Mississippi, where the negroes largely outnumber the whites and the load is consequently very heavy, the ratio enrolled already two years ago was 60 per cent., or Maine's former record; and in South Carolina, which has three negroes to two whites, 63 per cent., or 3 per cent. more than formerly in Maine. The average length of the school year in eight of the sixteen old slave States is 100 or more days, against Maine's 99; and the expenditure for schools in West Virginia, with a population of 618,457 in 1880, is \$997,431, against a yearly average of only \$695,059 for the decade following 1860 in Maine, which had then 628,279 people, or about 10,000 more than West Virginia now. It would have been nothing short of an outrage if anybody in 1870 had proposed to tax the whole country to help sustain schools in Maine; it is nothing short of an outrage for anybody to propose a similar thing for the South in 1886.

[From The Evening Post, March 5, 1886.]

We presented on Wednesday a comparison between the condition of public education in Maine during the decade beginning with 1860 and the state of things in the South now, based upon a detailed statement prepared for us by the Superintendent of Common Schools in the New England State. We have since received a similar statement regarding the schools of another New England State, compiled for THE EVENING POST by Mr. Justus Dartt, Superintendent of Education for Vermont, which still further establishes our contention that the South is already doing about as well by her schools as northern New England was doing by hers twenty or twenty-five years ago. Mr. Dartt's statement shows that the average number of children of the school age (then between the ages of four and eighteen) in the years following 1860 was 87,836, and the average number of them enrolled in public schools, 68,525, being only about 78 per cent. In other words, after generations of a common-school system in Vermont, only a little over three-quarters of the children of school age ever entered a public school-house

during the year. Even in South Carolina, where the school system is only about fifteen years old, and there are three negroes to every two whites, the proportion of children of the school age attending school (178,028 out of 281,664) already exceeds 63 per cent., while in West Virginia it is 73; in Delaware, 77; in Texas—a State which many Northerners consider very backward—79, or more than Vermont's old record, and in Florida, 93. Mr. Dartt's figures show that in Vermont, twenty years ago, the average daily attendance of those children enrolled in school fell a little short of 64 per cent.; in Mississippi, during the last year, the corresponding percentage was 58; in Delaware and West Virginia, 61; in Alabama and North Carolina, 62; in Kentucky, 63; in Georgia, 66; in South Carolina, 69; in Florida, 73, and in Missouri, 75. In Vermont then the average length of the school year was 119 days; now in West Virginia and Texas it is 100 days; in Louisiana and Kentucky, 102; in Missouri, 113; in Virginia, 120; in Delaware, 157; and in Maryland, 182. The average annual school expenditure per pupil enrolled in Vermont then was \$5 06, though it sank as low as \$4 16 in 1863, and \$4 24 in 1864; in 1884 the corresponding figures were \$4 59 in Virginia, \$5 99 in West Virginia, \$6 78 in Texas, \$6 88 in Delaware, \$8 13 in Missouri, and \$10 09 in Maryland. The sturdy manhood of Vermont during the period between 1860 and 1865 would have resented the suggestion that the State needed Federal assistance to bring her schools up to a proper level, and the most hopeful sign for the South is the fact that so many sturdy men are found there who resent a similar suggestion in 1886.

Why the Government Should Not Help.

[From The Evening Post, March 11, 1886.]

We have watched with care the leading newspapers of Georgia, like the *Atlanta Constitution* and the *Savannah News*, to see whether any exception would be taken to our demonstration, from the official report of the State School Commissioner and the recorded action of the Legislature, that "the Empire State of the South" had refused to make a necessary and feasible increase of the school fund simply because the mere prospect of the passage of the Blair bill had aroused the expectation

that the money needed would be obtained from the Federal Treasury. No Georgia paper has ventured to dispute or question a single count in this indictment. It must, therefore, be accepted as established that the mere prospect of receiving Federal aid has exerted an effect upon educational interests in Georgia hardly less disastrous than that produced by the Western Reserve fund upon the schools of Connecticut fifty years ago.

THE EVENING POST at the beginning pronounced the Blair scheme "a bill to promote mendicancy," and it appeals to the unquestioned record of the bad influence exerted by the mere prospect of the bill's becoming a law, not only in Georgia, but in South Carolina and elsewhere, as full justification of the characterization. We are glad to observe that the *Atlanta Constitution* has self-respect enough to cease anything like vigorous advocacy, and contents itself with an evidently half-hearted and halting endorsement of the measure. The *Savannah News* has also progressed so far as to relinquish its old pronounced position in favor of the scheme, and now contents itself with asking, "Why should not the Government help?" Simply because the National Government should not do anything for a State which the State can do itself. Georgia can "continue her schools in operation for six months" of the year, which is as long as they are kept open in most Northern States with a corresponding density of population, and long enough to dispel the illiteracy among all except the adults, whose case is of course hopeless. The reason why a State like Georgia should do this alone is the same reason why a man who is now abundantly able to make his own living should support himself by his own efforts rather than ask charity on the ground that he had a long streak of bad luck twenty or twenty-five years ago, especially if the old trouble was chiefly his own fault. We are not surprised that the Georgia papers are changing their tone. They can only support the bill on the ground that Georgia is too poor to educate her children, and that involves the suppression from their news columns of all the manifold evidences of the State's wonderful growth and prosperity, not merely for the three or four weeks that the bill was before the Senate, but for the months which may elapse before it is taken up in the House. A newspaper of the *Constitution's* enterprise in collecting and publishing the news could never stand such a strain.

The Mayo Myth.

[From The Evening Post, March 12, 1886.]

The study of myths has long constituted one of the most fascinating branches of modern literature. Few things are more interesting than the tracing of how one of these delusions has taken captive the imagination of a whole people, and even left its impress upon the course of a nation's history.

Such investigations are commonly supposed to be purely the province of the antiquarian, who mouses among the scanty records and the vague traditions of a far remote past in some half-civilized land. But this conventional restriction upon the field of inquiry is altogether too narrow. The myth still survives, not only among barbarous tribes, but among the most progressive nations. A striking illustration of this truth has been presented in the United States during the last few years.

When Senator Blair originally presented his scheme for Federal aid to education in the South, he produced as the chief authority for its necessity a person named Mayo. When people asked why the nation should make such a revolutionary departure in government as to assume for the first time a share in the maintenance of schools in the various States, the answer always was: "Mr. Mayo says it is necessary." When anybody inquired why the Southern people did not raise more money in order to secure better schools, the reply promptly came: "Mr. Mayo says they cannot stand any heavier taxation." When a doubter suggested that the schools which they already had were steadily and rapidly dispelling illiteracy among the only class where it can be dispelled—the persons who are not too old to attend school—the impertinence was sharply rebuked by the announcement: "Mr. Mayo says there are four million children in the South who are not getting any decent education." Indeed, the main support of the whole argument that the South needs educational appropriations from Washington has been all along the popular faith in what may be called the Mayo myth—the belief, in other words, that there was a being gifted with omniscience in all matters concerning public schools in every part of the country, whose decision that the Blair bill should become a law could be disregarded by the nation only at such risk of ruin as no prudent nation would venture to run.

The vitality of this myth has been some-

thing extraordinary. Show by a mathematical demonstration, as plain as that two and two make four, that an old slave State like Missouri or Texas has as many of her children in school as an old free State like Maine or New Hampshire, and gives them as long a school year; the victim of the myth considered it sufficient answer, "But Mr. Mayo says that the Blair bill ought to be passed, and Mr. Mayo knows." There was but one person in the wide world who could shake such a delusion, and that person was Mr. Mayo.

The success of a myth necessarily involves an implicit faith. The suggestion of applying to the object of a myth the prosaic rules which govern among ordinary men in mundane affairs has been resented by the devout, in all ages and among all peoples, as nothing short of sacrilege. We have seen this principle illustrated in the present case. When the EVENING POST a few weeks ago ventured to hint a doubt of Mr. Mayo's omniscience, true believers in the myth lifted their hands in holy horror and loudly invoked condign vengeance upon the abandoned infidel. With such faithful followers it seemed hopeless to break the god's sway. But he has at last done the work himself at a single stroke by writing a letter (which was published in THE EVENING POST). At the very outset Mr. Mayo admits that it may be "an open question" whether or not he is the safest guide who ever offered to lead a nation, and asks people to consider "the relative value" of his testimony and that of other people. In short, he abandons that supernatural plane upon which he has hitherto rested, amid the adulation of awe-struck worshippers, and offers to discuss matters on the basis of a common humanity. No myth could survive such *felo de se*.

Treating Mr. Mayo, therefore, with his express permission, as a human being, we shall proceed to show what slight foundation there ever was for the belief in his omniscience, which has been so long and so widely held, and which still survives in some benighted quarters. He complains, at the outset, that it is unfair to "compare the present condition of education in the South with certain shortcomings in the country-school keeping of New England." But THE EVENING POST makes no such comparison. We place side by side, not isolated communities, but entire States; not a few "old towns depleted of their younger people by

emigration," but whole Northern States and whole Southern States. If the average in a New England State is brought down by the small and short schools in thinly-settled hill towns, it is also lifted up by the large and long schools in the populous cities and chief towns. When one wants to know whether or not a certain State has good schools as compared with another State, he does not ask a man who has visited some town in the one State for his observations, and another man who has visited some town in the other State for his; but he examines the official reports, which show for each State what proportion of all the children attend school, how long on the average schools are kept open for their instruction, and how much is expended for each pupil.

For the purpose of presenting at a glance a comprehensive comparison between Southern and Northern schools, we have compiled from the latest reports of the Superintendents of Education (generally for the year 1884, but in a few cases for 1885) a table which represents the percentage of all children of the school age who are enrolled in public schools, the average daily attendance of those children who attend school, the average length of the school year, and the average amount expended per pupil, for a number of States in New England, the South, and the West. With the exception of Delaware and Maryland, the Southern States are all large and thinly settled, Florida, for example, having but 5 inhabitants to the square mile, Texas 6, Arkansas 15, West Virginia 25, South Carolina 33, and Virginia 38. It would therefore be obviously unjust to compare them with small and densely-peopled States like Massachusetts, which has 222 people to the square mile, or Rhode Island, which has 255. The only fair comparison is with New England States like Maine, with 22 people to the square mile; Vermont, with 36, and New Hampshire, with 38; or with Western States like Nebraska, Minnesota, and Kansas. The school age is from five to twenty years in most Southern States, and in the Northern States selected, except New Hampshire, where it is nominally only from five to fifteen, but Superintendent Patterson informs us that children attend school by thousands outside these limits, so that the only fair test of enrolment there as elsewhere seems to be the division of the whole number attending school by the whole number of persons between five and twenty years.

The following table presents the salient figures, first, for the three Northern States in New England; second, for the eight old slave States furthest advanced in public education; third, for the three Western States just mentioned; fourth, for the remaining former slave States; and, finally, for Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont during the decade between 1860 and 1870, as compiled for THE EVENING POST by the heads of the educational departments for those States:

	Per cent. enrolled.	Average daily attendance.	Length of school-year in days.	Amount expended per pupil.
Maine	69	68	104	\$7 75
New Hampshire ..	64	71	100	9 63
Vermont	72	68	126	8 37
Delaware	77	61	157	6 88
Maryland	55	51	182	10 09
Virginia	52	57	120	4 50
West Virginia	73	61	100	5 99
Missouri	68	75	113	8 13
Texas	79		100	6 78
Florida	93	73	90	5 37
Tennessee	61	59	78	2 73
Minnesota	62	45	112	12 63
Kansas	74	68	115	9 50
Nebraska	66	60	120	13 39
Alabama	56	62	83	2 30
Mississippi	60	58	77½	3 01
South Carolina ..	63	69	70	2 41
North Carolina ..	56	62	62	3 12
Georgia	57	66	65	3 12
Kentucky	49	63	102	2 48
Arkansas	48			3 67
Louisiana	19	69	102	4 24
Maine, 1860-70 ..	60	78	99	5 05
N. H., 1860-70 ..	85	65	97	4 01
Vermont, 1860-70.	78	64	119	5 06

Mr. Mayo says that "not one-third of Southern children and youth between the ages of six and twenty are or ever have been in any effective school." The table shows that more than two-thirds of all children of school age attend school in Delaware, West Virginia, Missouri, Florida and Texas; almost two-thirds in South Carolina, Mississippi, and Tennessee; and more than half in Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama, to which should be added Arkansas, its percentage of only 48 being due to the fact that nearly a third of the districts failed to report their enrolment.

The stress of Mr. Mayo's remarks must therefore lie upon the adjective "effective," as applied to school. We must regard the selection of the adjective as unhappy, since different people will inevitably interpret it in

different ways. However, all will agree that no school is effective which has a poor teacher. Accepting this definition, it can be shown by official testimony that in a New England State only about one-third of the children are in any "effective" school. The last report of Mr. N. A. Luce, Superintendent of Common Schools in Maine, says, in the first place, that "of the 213,524 persons of school age in the State 67,179, or one in every three, failed to attend the schools at all during the year"; and in the second place, regarding the instruction given the two-thirds who do attend, that "the conditions are such that every third school must, perforce, secure a cheap teacher, and hence a poor teacher." If therefore only about a third of Southern children attend any "effective" school, their condition does not differ greatly from that of the children in Maine.

Nor is Maine's case exceptional. The Connecticut Board of Education stated in their report to the Legislature last January that "in most of our schools the teachers are decidedly not equal to their work"; that "many teachers are not familiar even with the common-school branches they are undertaking to teach"; that "the answers given to questions about common-school studies by some persons who are at present teaching in the schools of Connecticut reveal blank abysses of ignorance which in a teacher are appalling to contemplate"; and that of 406 who tried to pass a State examination, which was "by no means too difficult for any one who is fit to teach," only 70 passed well enough to receive a certificate of the lowest grade. The teaching in New England schools now does not differ materially from what it was a generation ago; certainly nobody will claim that, on the whole, it is not as good as it used to be. Yet under such teaching boys and girls were so well educated that the percentage of illiteracy reported by the census of 1880 was only 3 1-2 per cent. in Maine and 4 1-5 per cent. in Connecticut, and a large part of this was among adults of foreign birth who came into the country too old to attend school.

But Mr. Mayo is sadly mistaken in supposing that "every well-informed school man of the South will substantiate" his assertion regarding the effectiveness of the instruction. So well-informed a school man as Mr. A. J. Russell, Superintendent of Public Instruction in Florida—a State where there are nearly as many negroes as whites, and yet where, of 66,798 children of both races between the

ages of six and twenty-one years, 62,327, or a trifle over 93 per cent., attend school—says upon this very point, in a recent letter to THE EVENING POST: "Our public schools are very fine and admirably conducted; indeed, our teachers have learned that their employment depends entirely upon their efficiency."

Mr. Solomon Palmer, Superintendent of Education in Alabama, in his report for the year ending last September, after speaking of the growing demand by the public that teachers shall be trained for their work, says that "to meet this demand for teachers specially educated and fitted for the profession, Alabama has established and now has in successful operation six normal schools, three for the white and three for the colored race," with 1,276 students during the last year. The last biennial report of Mr. Bernard L. Butcher, State Superintendent of Free Schools in West Virginia, contains the testimony of another "well-informed school-man of the South," who fails to substantiate Mr. Mayo's assertion. Referring to the large increase in the proportion of teachers who are women, the report says: "We are fortunate in being able to draw into the service of the State the daughters of many of the families of our best people. This is true now of the whole South. No people in the whole history of the past have such a magnificent contingent of culture and enthusiasm to draw upon for the primary training of the whole population as has, through the fortunes and misfortunes of civil war, fallen to the lot of the Southern States."

Mr. Mayo speaks of the "short terms of the country school" in the South. He still retains the contempt for "columns of figures" which befits the hero of a myth, but now that he has come down upon the plane of humanity, we must hold him to merely human methods of comparison. Our table gives the average length of the school-year for each State, but it should be explained that in more than one instance the figures are for the rural districts alone, the towns and cities having longer terms, which would bring up the real average for the whole State. Yet, it appears that in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri, Louisiana, and Texas—eight of the sixteen old slave States—the school-year ranges from 100 up to 182 days, against 100 in New Hampshire now, and 99 in Maine and 97 in New Hampshire

from 1860 to 1870; while only North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia furnish less than 75 days.

Mr. Mayo speaks of "the difficulty of regular attendance" at the South. "Difficulty" there may be, but the table shows that it is so generally overcome that the percentage of average daily attendance is larger in Missouri and Florida than in New Hampshire; larger even in South Carolina than in Maine, Vermont, or Kansas; larger in Delaware, West Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Kentucky than in Nebraska; and even larger in the Southern States which make the poorest showing than in Minnesota.

Mr. Mayo speaks of the "meagre salaries" of teachers at the South. In Mississippi the average monthly pay of teachers, of both sexes, is \$31.20; in Maine, \$32.59 for male teachers, and \$16.28 for females. Mr. Mayo, of course, knows that "a dollar goes a good deal further" at the South than at the North, in expenditures for schools as in everything else; in other words, that an average expenditure of \$5 per pupil in a Southern State is equivalent to a per capita of at least \$6 to \$8 in a far Northern State.

That the omniscience of a supernatural being should have been attributed to one who thus proves to be the most fallible of mortals, and that the Congress of the United States should have proposed, upon the vague outgivings of such an oracle, to revolutionize the established educational policy of the Government, will be accounted in future years one of the most extraordinary exhibitions of popular superstition on record; and the Mayo myth must hereafter occupy a prominent place in every history of the world's mythology.

Hopeless and Curable Illiteracy.

[From The Evening Post, March 23, 1886.]

The *Christian Union* is almost the only journal of character and influence in the whole North which longer supports the Blair bill unreservedly, and it plainly betrays the disquieting effect of THE EVENING POST's arguments against the measure. More than once during the discussion has it shifted its ground and begged the question. It began on January 28 by asserting that "an appropriation for education in the South is the payment of a debt due by justice," which must be paid without question, like any other just debt. But on February 18 it admitted that "if it were demonstrable that

national aid would impede, not promote, public education, that would be conclusive against it." THE EVENING POST thereupon demonstrated from the official records, in the most convincing possible way, that "national aid would impede public education," by showing that the mere prospect of such aid had already impeded it. But the *Christian Union* now (March 18) deserts its original position, that "an appropriation for education in the South is the payment of a debt due by justice," growing out of the nation's responsibility for the slavery which chiefly produced the illiteracy, and advances another very different proposition, that "it is the function of the Federal Government to secure the education of all sections and all citizens"; while, after expressly admitting in February that a demonstration of the bad effect of national aid would be "conclusive against" its January platform, it declares in March regarding its new proposition: "Nor from its maintenance shall we be turned aside by evidence to show that gratuities pauperize."

The *Christian Union* complains that "THE EVENING POST, which leads the opposition to the Blair bill, does not discuss the fundamental question—this, namely, whether illiteracy in the late slave States is properly a State burden or a national burden." And it proceeds to argue, in a long and labored article, that illiteracy in every State is properly a national burden; "that it is the province of the Federal Government to see to it that education is provided for all sections and all citizens of the Republic; that this as much pertains to the Federal Government as the management of the Post-office or the national currency." THE EVENING POST has not discussed this question, because it has never before known any reputable journal to advance a doctrine so hostile to the most firmly established traditions of the American Government and the most deeply rooted sentiments of the American people. In all the many pleas for the Blair bill, in the Senate and in the press alike, it has invariably been urged by every advocate that it could only be justified as a temporary measure, which could never become a precedent for a permanent policy; that it was a piece of "emergency legislation," on the same plane as the "war measures," to be excused solely as a necessity to meet a special exigency in the South, and never to be adduced as justification of a system so repugnant to the whole spirit of our institutions as

that of continuous Federal supervision over education in all the States.

We should therefore suspend the discussion here if the *Christian Union* would rest its advocacy of the pending bill solely upon the ground that "it is the function of the Federal Government to secure the education of all sections and all citizens." But it lacks the confidence to do this. Knowing that the measure would receive practically no support upon that ground, it falls back upon the familiar old plea for Federal aid as a necessity to meet an exceptional situation in the South. "The argument for present Federal action," it says, "rests on two propositions: first, the right of any nation to do anything which is necessary for its self-preservation; and, second, the constitutional duty of this particular nation, under the Federal system, to do whatever may be necessary to guarantee a republican form of government to the several States." It holds that education is necessary for these two purposes, and consequently that Federal appropriations are now necessary for the South. "It avails nothing," it adds, "to say that some Southern States are already doing as well for their children as some Northern States. This would avail against a plea for charity; it is not availing against a plea for justice." But in the very next sentence it shifts its ground, and begs the question again. A plea for justice can only be met by proof that it is not really justice which is pleaded for; considerations of expediency have no place. Yet, after all its talk about the matter being one of "justice" alone, the *Christian Union* admits that the question of Federal aid to Southern education is really, as everybody else holds, a question of expediency, and that the "debt" need not be paid if the money is not required by the putative creditor. We quote its exact language:

For that purpose [viz., to avail against a plea for justice] it must be shown that the States are already doing all that needs to be done to save the nation from the perils of ignorance; that there is no danger, or that it is not imminent, or that it is certain to be avoided or vanquished without national action.

Declining discussion of the merely theoretical question whether permanent Federal supervision of education in the States is a wise national policy, we meet the *Christian Union* upon the exceedingly practical ground of the expediency of the proposed temporary measure, where it finally takes its stand and proceeds to throw up entrenchments of vague

generalities about the appalling dimensions of Southern illiteracy. It says, for instance :

According to the census of 1880, 6,000,000 of the 36,000,000 of persons over ten years of age in the United States could not write, and nearly 5,000,000 could not read. About one in thirteen of the entire number of voters could not read their ballots. Who will say that this does not give food for reflection? That it does not indicate imminent peril? That it does not require a vigorous employment of all national resources for national safety? The peril of this illiteracy is increased by its local concentration. Mr. James shows that, according to the census of 1880, in nine Southern States over one-third of the population could not read.

The *Christian Union*, like so many other well-meaning but short-sighted advocates of the Blair bill, has overlooked the salient fact in the situation: *Much more than two-thirds of the illiteracy in the South in 1880 was hopeless, because much more than two-thirds of the illiterates were too old to attend school.* As one argument for Federal aid, the fact is always cited that in 1880 millions of persons over ten years of age in the South could not read; and as another, the fact that a large proportion of the voters could not read. Rightly considered, the second fact answers the first, and the two combined constitute a strong argument against Federal aid. The chief reason why millions of persons over ten years of age in the South cannot read is because millions of voters, and of grown-up mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters of voters, cannot read. It is possible to demonstrate this clearly from the last census by a table which shows, for each of the sixteen

twenty-one years of age; fourth, the whole number of adult illiterates of both races; and, fifth, the number of illiterates between ten and twenty-one years of age.

It will be seen that in 1880 there were in the South 4,715,395 persons over ten years of age who could not write, and that of the whole number no less than 2,961,371—being 63 per cent., or almost two thirds of all—were grown-up men and women, who would never go to school if they had a chance. It is these three millions of hopeless adult illiterates—two millions of them negroes born slaves before 1860, and the other million born but little better off intellectually as the “poor whites” of the slavery era—who constitute the bulk of that great total which is always paraded as a conclusive argument for Federal aid. They ought, on the contrary, to be entirely eliminated from the case; for a dozen Blair bills, appropriating a dozen times \$77,000,000 apiece, would never produce any effect upon people who are too old to go to school. Moreover, three millions by no means represents all the people who were hopeless illiterates in 1880. Half of the persons between ten and twenty-one had reached their fifteenth year, and but few persons attend school after they are fifteen. Of these illiterates between fifteen and twenty-one fully half had never been able to attend school. Before 1880 the school system was not well established in a number of Southern States, as is shown by the fact that the number of pupils in some States has since doubled. Not only, therefore, were almost two-thirds of all Southern illiterates adults, but half of the illiterates between ten and twenty-one were above fifteen, and thus too old to attend school, and of this half fully half had never been able to attend school, owing to the sparseness of school privileges during their childhood. If a Blair bill had been passed in 1880, and the most approved school system ever known had been immediately established throughout the South, not merely two-thirds, but three-fourths, if not four-fifths, of all the Southern illiterates reported by the census of 1880 would have been found too old to profit by it.

Excluding the illiterates of 1880 who were too old to go to school, it is easy to prove that the curable illiteracy of 1886 is being cured so rapidly that the danger from ignorance “is certain to be avoided or vanquished without national action.” The vital fact here is this: *Illiteracy has been avoided in New Eng-*

	Illiterates over 10 years old.	White illiterates over 21 years old.	Colored illiterates over 21 years old.	Total adult illiterates of both races.	Illiterates between 10 and 21 years old.
Alabama...	433,447	60,174	206,878	267,052	166,395
Arkansas...	202,015	50,235	68,444	118,679	83,336
Delaware...	19,414	6,462	7,935	14,397	5,017
Florida.....	10,183	10,855	34,752	45,607	29,545
Georgia.....	520,416	71,693	247,318	319,011	201,405
Kentucky...	348,362	124,723	90,738	215,461	132,931
Louisiana...	318,380	34,813	178,789	213,602	104,778
Maryland...	134,488	34,155	66,357	100,512	33,976
Mississippi...	373,201	27,789	208,122	235,911	137,290
Missouri....	208,754	89,924	40,357	130,281	78,473
N. Carol'a...	463,975	116,437	174,152	290,589	173,396
S. Carol'a...	369,848	34,335	200,063	234,398	135,450
Tennessee...	410,722	118,734	126,939	245,673	165,049
Texas.....	316,432	65,117	121,827	186,944	129,488
Virginia....	430,352	71,004	214,340	285,344	145,008
W. Virginia	85,376	45,340	7,539	52,879	32,497
	4,715,395	961,820	1,999,551	2,961,371	1,754,024

old slave States, first, the whole number of persons over ten years of age who could not write; second, the number of such white persons over twenty-one years of age; third, the number of such colored persons over

land by a school system no better than that which many Southern States already have, and which the rest can have without national aid and "without unduly burdening the people"—to quote School Commissioner Orr's expression in urging the Georgia Legislature over three years ago to increase the school tax so as to keep the schools open six months in the year. In Maine only about 3 per cent. of the persons over ten years old in 1870 or in 1880 could not read, and a large part of these were adult foreign immigrants—mostly French Canadians. Such a public-school system as Maine had previous to 1880, therefore, was good enough to "avoid" the danger of ignorance, and a corresponding system in the South now will "vanquish" that danger. A careful compilation of the Maine records, made expressly for THE EVENING POST by Mr. N. A. Luce, State Superintendent of Common Schools, shows that between 1860 and 1870 the average percentage of all children of school age who were enrolled in school during the year was 60 per cent., and the average length of school throughout the State was ninety-nine days a year. The latest reports of Southern school superintendents (in most cases for the year 1884, and the figures for 1886 would be still better) show that in Florida, where there are nearly as many negroes as whites, 93 per cent. of all the children of school age, white and black, are enrolled in school; in Texas, 79; in Delaware, 77; in West Virginia, 73; in Missouri, 68; in South Carolina, the State with most negroes, 63 per cent., or 3 per cent. more than Maine's old record; in Tennessee, 61; in Mississippi, next to South Carolina the State with most negroes proportionately, 60 per cent., or the same as formerly in Maine; and in all but four of the remaining States, within 5 per cent. of Maine's old ratio; that the average length of the school year already exceeds Maine's former record of 99 days in eight of the sixteen Southern States, ranging from 100 in West Virginia and Texas up to 182 in Maryland, while it falls below 75 days in only three of the other eight States, and in every one of these eight might be lifted above 99 days if the people would only tax themselves for schools as Maine people have always done.

"Later figures [than those of the census of 1880] are not much more encouraging," says the *Christian Union*. Is it "not much more encouraging" that, whereas only 108,-

074 persons attended Virginia schools the year before the census, 303,343, or almost three times as many, were enrolled in the school year 1884-5? Is it "not much more encouraging" that in Florida, within the same brief period, the number of scholars came near doubling, jumping from 38,315 to 62,327? Is it "not much more encouraging" that in Arkansas the enrollment increased from 112,233 in 1882-3 to 153,216 the next year, or nearly one-third in a twelve-month? Is it "not much more encouraging" that while the enumerators in 1880 found that 35 per cent. of all persons in Texas between ten and twenty-one years of age were illiterates, a census in 1884 showed that only 5 per cent. of children of school age were unable to read?

"How long, at this rate," asks the *Christian Union*, "before the nation will get rid of illiteracy in the Southern States?" Obviously, so far as three-fourths or four-fifths of the illiteracy of 1880 was concerned, not until the grown-up illiterates die off, well along in the twentieth century. So far as the children of 1886 are concerned, which is the only vital question, in a very short time—if only such people as the editor of the *Christian Union* will leave the Southern States to work out their salvation in the good old self-reliant New England way, and will cease advocacy of this worse than unnecessary, this demoralizing, this mendicancy-promoting Blair Bill, "the mere discussion" of which, according to the official report of Superintendent Coward of South Carolina, has "revived into active expression all the latent or hitherto silent opposition to the common-school system."

The South Able to Support Her Schools.

One of the stock arguments which Mr. Mayo and his faithful followers have always brought forward with a triumphant air as conclusive proof that the Southern States could not educate their children without Federal aid, was the fact that Northern States spend much more money on their school children per capita than the South could possibly afford to do. But the argument only illustrates the ignorance or carelessness of those who make it. A school system of equal merit should cost very much more in the North than in the South, by reason of the difference in the character of the population and the environment. The *Christian Union* recently made the state-

ment that "eight Southern States, omitting those not desolated and impoverished by the war, were expending on their school children in 1883-4 \$1.59 per capita, as against \$8.69 per capita expended by the Northern States east of the Missouri River; that is, the Southern States were expending less than one-fifth as much as the Northern States." It thereupon asked, "How long, at this rate, before the nation will get rid of illiteracy in the Southern States?" It might as well cite the fact that Vermont expended in the last school year upon public schools only \$6.03 for each child of school age, while the corresponding per capita in Massachusetts was \$20.42, and expect to find that the ratio of illiteracy in Vermont is more than three times as great as in Massachusetts—instead of being less, as is actually the case—because Massachusetts spends more than three times as much upon children of school age as Vermont does.

The reason why Massachusetts spends more than three times as much as Vermont per capita of school children is because Massachusetts is a thickly settled State, with the greater part of her people living in cities and large towns, which have expensive systems of graded and high schools in operation nine or ten months in the year, while Vermont is a thinly settled agricultural State, with but two places having over 10,000 inhabitants, and with nearly all her children attending the cheaply conducted district school about five months a year. The same reason will enable the South to keep down the percentage of illiteracy to Vermont's creditable record without spending more than a quarter or a third as much as Massachusetts does. Between the Potomac and the Rio Grande, and between the Ohio and the Gulf, there were in 1880 only 70 places having 4,000 or more inhabitants, while in Massachusetts alone there were 85, and in all "the Northern States east of the Missouri River" 506. It would be as absurd to expect that schools should cost as much in the South as in the North, as it would be to expect that they should cost as much in Vermont as in Massachusetts.

Another argument which is "off the same piece of goods" is the one based upon the fact that the wealth of the South in proportion to her children is far less than that of the North. The *Christian Union*, for example, says:

The assessed wealth of these eight Southern

States in the same years was, in round numbers, one and a quarter billions; the assessed wealth of the Northern States (east of the Missouri), twelve and a third billions; the school children of the Southern States numbered three and a third millions, the school children of the Northern States a little over nine millions. That is, the Southern States, with one-twelfth the property of the Northern States, had one-third the children to educate.

This is the same as saying that the North has four times as much wealth to expend upon the education of each child as the South, and upon this showing the *Christian Union* declares that "it is not true that the South could give her children the necessary education if she chose to do so." We scarcely remember a more striking illustration of the dangers which attend hasty generalization. One might with equal justice declare that Vermont cannot "give her children the necessary education" because she has only one-eighteenth the wealth of Massachusetts, but nearly one-third as many children. The assessed valuation of Vermont in 1880 was \$86,806,775, and the number of children of the school age is 99,463, or \$873 of wealth for each child; the valuation of Massachusetts, \$1,584,756,802, and the number of children 343,810, or \$4,609 for each child, being almost six times as much per child as in Vermont. The reason of course is because Vermont is almost exclusively an agricultural community, while Massachusetts has diversified industries, a host of cities and towns, and all the aggregations of capital natural to a thickly settled State. The South is almost entirely composed of rural communities, like Vermont, and the argument for the Blair bill from the South's valuation being smaller than the North's is as ridiculous as it would be to say that Vermont cannot properly educate her children, as she has always done, because she is not nearly so rich as Massachusetts.

Equally fallacious is the plea that taxation for schools in the South is already as large as in the North, and that the rate cannot be increased. Such comparisons always disregard the salient fact that in the South the bulk of the school fund comes from the State tax, while in the North the State tax forms only a small part of the whole amount expended upon schools, local taxation being the chief reliance. No better statement of the case can be made than is to be found in the last report of Mr. Solomon Palmer, Superintendent of Education in Alabama, who says:

If our system is to be kept up to its present standard of efficiency, there will have to be an

increase of school funds to meet the demands of our rapidly increasing school population. At present the entire school revenues of the State, including poll tax, are only sufficient to pay \$1.12 to each child within the school age. In proportion to population and value of taxable property, Alabama appropriates directly from her annual revenues for school purposes as much, perhaps, as any other State. For instance, the rich and populous State of Pennsylvania, for the school year ending June 2, 1884, paid \$5,403,636.41 for the tuition of the children of the public schools, only \$1,000,000 of which was appropriated directly from the general revenues of the State, all the rest being raised by local taxation in the cities, towns, and districts where used. The same might be said of New York, Michigan, Indiana, and other States which spend millions for school purposes mainly raised by local taxation.

That the South can sustain local taxation for her schools as well as the North is clearly shown by the same report. Mr. Palmer says upon this point:

I would earnestly urge upon towns, villages, and other populous school districts the necessity of raising by local taxation a sufficient school fund, when taken in connection with the amount appropriated directly by the State, to maintain good graded schools at least eight months in the year. I am gratified to know that the people in many parts of the State are waking up to a sense of the importance of local taxation for public schools. For many years Mobile has expended for school purposes \$20,000 or more in excess of the annual State appropriation, raised by local taxation principally. Mr. Palmer then describes in detail the expenditures for such purposes in a number of cities and towns which are maintaining fine graded schools by means of local taxation, and adds: It is to be hoped in a year or two every town and village, and in the near future every school district, in the State can boast of a well-conducted and prosperous graded school in which tuition is absolutely free.

Superintendent Palmer's report shows conclusively—and every other Southern Superintendent's report shows the same thing—that what the Southern people need is not money from the Federal Treasury for their schools, but a disposition to pay local taxes for educational purposes, as Northern people have always done. His report shows also that the Southern people have been developing this disposition in a normal way, and the worst feature of the Blair bill is its already demonstrated tendency to check this disposition, by holding out the hope of subsidies from Washington. The *Selma Times*, one of the leading newspapers of Alabama and a journal which declares its belief, not only in education generally, but “especially in the education of the negro because he stands more in need of it than the white man,” strenuously opposes Federal aid upon this ground, as follows:

Already the insidious influence of the Blair bill has been at work; there has been a falling off in interest among the Southern States in

their schools; appropriations have been kept back in expectation that the Federal pie would be handed round. If the Federal pie is ever handed round, we shall see our own systems debauched by contact with a system under Federal supervision; we shall see the negro once more looking to Washington for sympathy and support, and we shall see the white man utterly indifferent to the fate of “the nation's ward.” This appropriation will be a perpetual one if it is ever once made, and will in our judgment crush State pride in education; it will strain more than they ever have been strained the relations of whites and blacks, and will leave us finally dependent upon Congressional bounty.

While some Southern papers still talk about the South's being unable to support her schools alone, there is a rising tide of indignation among self-respecting journals in that part of the country at the assumption that their section should accept the rôle of a mendicant. The *Selma Times* speaks for this growing element in the Southern press when it says that “it is idle to talk of the South's not being able to educate the negro,” and consequently of her requiring Federal aid, “in the presence of what she has already done.” The *Lynchburg Virginian*, one of the leading newspapers in another State, displays the same spirit. Referring to the fact that three colleges in Virginia “have done a great deal of begging in the North,” it says that the begging “has been downright humiliating,” and it expresses the hope that if any Northern people are meditating a favorable response to such appeals, “accompanied with doleful pictures of the pinching poverty of our people,” they will “decide not to give a stiver.” The *Virginian* adds:

We are not as yet, in Virginia, reduced to a condition of mendicancy. And the opportunities of our youth for an ample education are more abundant and easier of appropriation than in most of the Northern States.

From the attempts of Mr. Mayo and his followers to convince the South that she was too poor to educate her children and should turn mendicant, THE EVENING POST appealed with confidence to the Southern people, and such manly protests as these of the *Selma Times* and the *Lynchburg Virginian* show that this confidence was well grounded.

The Spirit of Self-Help in Tennessee.

[From The Evening Post, March 29, 1887.]

The Tennessee Legislature responds quickly and heartily to the President's plea, in his veto of the Texas Seed Bill, for a revival, of the old-time “sturdiness of our national character.” Within a week after Congress had adjourned, and the scheme of Federal aid to Southern education had thus lapsed, the lower branch of the Legislature,

by a vote of more than five to one, passed a bill, the principle of which was soon after accepted by the Senate, much more than doubling the annual contribution of the State to public education. By this bill as it finally became a law the proportion of the general State tax devoted to the schools has been increased from 10 to 15 cents on every \$100 of property, and 10 cents of what is called the privilege tax is applied to the same purpose, thus raising the total school fund from 10 to 25 cents per \$100, or more than doubling it—besides which both branches have agreed in doubling the former appropriation for the normal school. This increase of the State school fund of itself assures a decided improvement in the system, and supplemented by the local taxes which the counties are able to levy, and which some of them are already levying, the *Memphis Appeal* says that “the schools of the State may be kept open for nine months in the year.” As the *Appeal* further says, “this would afford abundant opportunity for the children, black as well as white, to get an education and as fair a start in life as is vouchsafed now in the States most favored in this regard.” Best promise of all for Tennessee’s future, this remarkable development of her public-school system, established only about fifteen years ago, is the work of her own people, without any help from a paternal government.

[From The Evening Post, April 11, 1887.]

It is very interesting to trace the steadily widening influence of the spirit of self-help in a commonwealth when once it is aroused. Congress had no sooner adjourned, and thus killed the scheme of Federal aid to Southern schools, than the Tennessee Legislature doubled the amount of money to be raised by State tax for the public schools. In turn the Tennessee Legislature has no sooner adjourned, after giving this impetus to the forward movement, than the county authorities begin to increase the amount of the local contribution to the school fund. A despatch from Jackson, Tenn., to the *Nashville American* says that the county court of Madison County at its meeting on Monday increased the county school tax from ten to twenty cents, so that the doubling of the State fund is accompanied by a doubling of the local fund. This action is the more noteworthy from the fact that Madison County is one of the very few in Tennessee, only half-a-dozen in all,

where the colored population outnumber the white, and where there was some plausibility for the claim that the taxpayers could not raise the money needed to secure a good school system. Such action in such a county strikingly vindicates the position taken by Senator Hawley, that while the people in the South may not yet be educated as they ought to be, and while some people may impatiently call upon the national Government to take up the work, “it is better in the long run for the great experiment of self-government that the nation shall permit the doctrine of self-government to have its own course and be glorified, as it ultimately will, beyond any shadow of a doubt.”

“Without Any Aid from Outside.”

[From The Evening Post, March 22, 1887.]

The first colored State fair in Florida, which was held at Jacksonville last week, furnished striking evidence both of the rapid progress which the race is making and of the growth in harmonious relations between the whites and blacks. The range of exhibits was very extensive, and the patronage included hundreds of white spectators every day. Better than the signs of progress in agriculture and the mechanical arts was the evidence furnished of progress in education and the finer arts. Mr. Albert J. Russell, Superintendent of Public Instruction in Florida for some years past, delivered the opening address, and congratulated his hearers upon the fact that the colored people had just reported the raising of funds which assured the establishment of an industrial school for the training of their boys and girls in a knowledge of tools and the trades. It will thus be seen that the negroes are not only improving to the full the educational advantages offered by the public schools, but are becoming so prosperous that they can establish an industrial school of their own. This is only one of many signs of progress in Florida, which is fast developing a common-school system worthy to rank with that of any Northern State. A letter from Mr. Russell announces that his forthcoming report for last year will show an increase in the number of schools from 1,504 in 1884 to 1,724 in 1885, and 1,919 in 1886, with a corresponding increase in the enrolment and average attendance. “Best of all,” he concludes, with that self-reliant spirit which is now so rapidly growing in the South, “the people of Florida are doing

it all themselves, without any aid from any outside source."

[From The Evening Post, April 14, 1887.]

The first Legislature under the new Constitution in Florida opened its session last week, and Gov. Perry's message showed that the State is advancing rapidly in prosperity. There has been a decrease of \$126,800 in the amount of the debt during the past two years, and the total indebtedness, less the sinking fund, now but slightly exceeds a million dollars, of which three-fifths are invested in the various educational funds. The taxable property has increased from \$60,042,655 in 1884 to \$76,611,409 in 1886, and within the same period more than 500 miles of new railroad were built and equipped, while as many miles of almost worse than useless old road were renovated. The Governor makes the gratifying announcement that "the cause of education and public schools in our State has kept pace with, if it has not outrun, our material progress"; and, citing the increase between 1884 and 1886 of schools from 1,504 to 1,919 and of attendance from 58,811 to 70,997, quite justifiably declares that "in the matter of public schools Florida is fast taking rank with some of the foremost States."

Gov. Perry's picture of the State's condition as a whole is fitly supplemented by a presentation of the "material status, industrial progress, trade, business, and prosperity of the colored people of Florida" in the *Southern Leader*, a Jacksonville paper published by colored men. Facts and figures are given in detail which warrant the conclusion that "the 150,000 colored citizens of this State own property to the value of about \$2,000,000, in farms, lands, town and city lots, houses, live stock, merchandise, orange groves, and all kinds of property." The editor regards this showing as proof that "we are producing, self-supporting and industrious citizens, willing and able to bear our share of all public burdens in common with other classes of citizens." Gov. Perry's message and the *Southern Leader's* summary combined show not only that Florida as a State is making wonderful progress, but also that the negroes enjoy their share in this prosperity, while the two deliverances entirely dispose of the claim that a region of which this is true needs outside aid for schools on the ground that it is still "impoverished by the war," or that the negroes are not able to bear their share of the public burdens.

Gen. Armstrong Against National Aid.

[From The Evening Post, May 23, 1887.]

Gen. S. C. Armstrong has just made his nineteenth annual report as principal of the Hampton (Va.) Normal and Agricultural Institute, and is able to announce that "no year's work has been more progressive and satisfactory," despite his enforced withdrawal from active supervision during much of the year from ill health. The report possesses a national interest from the fact that Gen. Armstrong frankly announces his conversion to the belief that the period for national aid to education in the South is now past, and that the present development of school systems by the States is the healthiest and best way of reaching the needed improvement. He says upon this point:

Many have looked to Government aid as the only relief. I long had that feeling, but since the marvellous educational progress of Virginia and other Southern States, my opinion has changed. The argument for national educational aid for the ex-slave States has unquestionably weakened. The border States are, I believe, able to educate their own blacks and every year are doing more and better for them. Texas has the largest school endowment of any State in the Union. Arkansas, Florida, and Tennessee are remarkably energetic and progressive, educationally. Louisiana seems the least so, with her curse of the lottery. Georgia and Alabama, with their wonderful new wealth, lack only the spur of public sentiment to provide annual school sessions of six months for all their children. While there is a fine school sentiment in North and South Carolina, they are not rich, and hardly seem able to bear the increased taxation required to extend the annual terms to more than three months, which is most inadequate. I saw excellent school work in some cities of Mississippi, but the country regions are badly off with their short sessions. Everywhere city schools seem well appointed and efficient, those for both races being equally cared for.

I believe that two millions, or perhaps more, of our negro population have still very inadequate school privileges, are wretchedly taught, if at all, and are suffering terribly from mental and moral darkness, helpless victims of others' avarice and of their own ignorance. We should hasten to help them. Can it be done? National aid is certainly of doubtful wisdom, if it must extend to all for the sake of reaching these, for it might do more harm than good. *I do not believe in the "Blair bill" as a wholesome measure, and indeed do not see how the needed aid can now be given, the crying evil remedied, by any national measure.* Every year, however, will brighten the outlook. The educational progressive movement at the South is, I believe, the most marvellous and the grandest fact or feature in this century of American life.

How the Bill Promotes Mendicancy.

[From The Evening Post, July 18, 1887.]

Senator Blair continues to push his absurd and demoralizing "Bill to Promote Mendicancy," and, with the help of Mr. Mayo, succeeds in getting it endorsed from time to time

by sundry conventions of one sort or another, as the National Education Convention which met at Chicago this week. Fortunately the public sentiment of the country is now pronounced against the scheme of Federal aid to Southern schools, since it has been demonstrated that such aid is not needed. The worst effect of the continued discussion of Federal aid as a possibility is its demoralizing effect upon independent effort in the South. The *Texas School Journal*, for example, says that "the sentiment is rapidly gaining ground among sound educational thinkers that we should encourage and stimulate local taxation, instead of looking to the Federal Treasury for funds, to support the school system in the South"; and that "we can see no possible effect of agitating the subject, other than that of giving to some communities in which public spirit is decidedly at a low ebb some pretext for postponing such action as they owe to their schools, through some vague hope that manna will somehow descend upon them from above."

[From The Evening Post, August 22, 1887.]

The manner in which the "Bill to Promote Mendicancy" operates to demoralize a community is illustrated in a most striking way by the recent election in Kentucky. The Republican gains in that election were chiefly in the mountain country in the eastern part of the State, and are attributed to the fact that the Republican party advocated the Blair bill, while the Democrats opposed it. As everybody knows, the scheme of Federal aid to Southern schools was originally proposed and has always been advocated upon the express ground that such aid was needed in order to properly educate the blacks. Its supporters have invariably held that it was the presence of the negroes alone which afforded any excuse for the proposition, since the whites, of course, could educate their own children without any outside assistance. Indeed, if there had been any way by which the benefits of the measure could have been confined to those parts of the South where the negroes are massed, the bill would have been framed to apply exclusively to those regions. In the whole South there is no section where the negro element is so small as in the mountain counties of eastern Kentucky. Pike County, for example, has 12,286 whites to only 174 blacks, Johnson 9,052 to 103, Martin 3,025 to 32, and so on. The country is very much the same sort of

country, so far as nature is concerned, as the mountain districts of the neighboring State of West Virginia, or the White and Green Mountain towns of New Hampshire and Vermont; and the negro population is so small that it is not to be taken into the account any more in eastern Kentucky than in New England. Yet it is in these counties, with a population almost exclusively white, that the Blair bill, which was devised in the interest of the blacks, is used as a vote-getting machine. The Rev. W. E. C. Wright, Professor in Berea (Ky.) College, an institution which has done a great work in the education of the negroes, says on this point, in the July number of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*: "The most serious objection to this bill is the fear that it would diminish, rather than increase, local exertions for the support of schools. Already the agitation of the measure is occasionally used as a reason for not increasing State funds. Southern candidates for Congress have been heard saying to their constituents, 'Your children have got to be educated. Would you rather pay for it yourselves, or have the nation pay for it?'" The intelligent opposition to the Blair bill of such men as Gen. Armstrong and Prof. Wright far outweighs the hasty endorsement of the project upon a partial presentation of the case by bodies like the recent National Educational Convention.

That Federal aid is not needed for the blacks is freshly shown by the speech upon State affairs which Gov. Lowry of Mississippi delivered at Vicksburg last week. Mississippi is one of the three Southern States in which the negro population exceeds the white, the figures for 1880 being 650,291 of the former to 479,398 of the latter, and if the Blair bill were needed for any State, it would be needed for Mississippi. But Gov. Lowry's speech shows again, as the reports of superintendents of education have shown before, that Mississippi is able to educate her children, black as well as white, without turning beggar. "Our common schools," he said, "are in a far better condition than they have been hitherto, and I may safely assert that there is not a boy or girl, white or black, that may not get a fair education by availing themselves of schools convenient to them, for it is the object of the law-making power of the State to so establish the schools that every child can be reached. I may say in this connection, too, that under the system adopted by the

present State Superintendent, we have a better class of teachers than heretofore." The Governor reported the higher institutions of learning also in a favorable condition, saying of the one for colored youths: "The Alcorn College for colored boys is prosperous and succeeding admirably. Its President and Faculty are working in harmony together, and the trustees, who are composed in the main of the citizens in the vicinity, look after the finances of the institution."

The Blair Bill at Home.

[From The Evening Post, August 26, 1887.]

A protracted discussion has just closed in the lower branch of the New Hampshire Legislature which is of general interest as illustrating the change of public sentiment on one of the most important issues now before the country. Early in the session a resolution was introduced, which, after the usual amount of "whereas" on the subject of illiteracy in the South, heartily endorsed the Blair bill and instructed the Congressional delegation to support the measure. The author of the resolution expected that it would go through the Legislature without any opposition, and Mr. Blair waited in perfect confidence for the commendation of his educational scheme by the law-makers of his own State. Undoubtedly this expectation would have been realized and this confidence justified if the proposition had been brought forward two years ago, and in this attitude the Legislature would only have reflected public sentiment at that time.

The resolution of endorsement was referred in regular course to the Committee on National Affairs, which proceeded to consider the questions involved upon their merits. This Committee includes Gen. Marston, the able lawyer, who has so long been prominent in the Republican party, and a number of other representative members of both parties, although two-thirds of its eleven members are Republicans. After thorough consideration the Committee decided, by a vote of nine to two, to report "inexpedient to legislate," which was virtually equivalent to saying that the resolution ought not to pass. Mr. Blair at once rushed to the State capital, and set earnestly at work to prevent the acceptance of the report, which would practically amount to a vote of want of confidence in him.

The discussion in the House opened last week and was continued this week, occupy-

ing nearly all the time during three days. Party lines were not regarded, Republicans and Democrats being found on both sides of the question, and some of the strongest speeches against the bill were made by prominent Republicans like Mr. John J. Bell of Exeter and Mr. C. A. Sulloway of Manchester. The advocates of the endorsing resolution had nothing to urge except the old arguments that the census of 1880 showed a great number of illiterates in the South, and that school statistics of the same period showed that the educational appropriations in that part of the country were then too small to provide proper schools. These were the arguments which when first brought out years ago appeared so strong that public sentiment generally regarded them as conclusive; but the opponents of the bill met and answered these arguments with the evidence gathered by THE EVENING POST a year and a half ago that the statistics of illiteracy had been unfairly treated by the advocates of the scheme, and that since 1880 the South has made such progress as to show that there is now no need of Federal aid, while there is proof that the mere agitation of the matter has done harm by discouraging local effort.

Mr. Oliver E. Branch of North Weare, who led the debate against the resolution, quoted the showing made in these columns, that while it is true that there were in the South 4,715,000 illiterates in 1880, 2,000,000 of these were negroes above twenty-one years of age, born slaves before 1860, and nearly 1,000,000 more adults belonging to the "poor whites" of the slavery era, all of them, of course, long past help by the Blair bill or any other educational measure, while fully half of the remainder had grown up before the school systems in their States were well established. He presented at length the statistics compiled by THE EVENING POST which show the wonderful progress made at the South since 1880, and the table which shows that in a number of States the school year is longer than in New Hampshire, and in most of the others nearly as long. Mr. Branch also cited at length the evidence that discussion of the scheme is discouraging the States from increasing their taxation for schools, and quoted the recent confession by Gen. Armstrong of Hampton that he has changed his opinion on the subject, and, in view of "the marvellous educational progress of Virginia and other Southern States," no longer favors

national aid, special weight attaching to this recantation from the fact that Gen. Armstrong's original endorsement of the scheme years ago had been greatly relied upon by Mr. Blair.

Mr. Bell and Mr. Sulloway argued with great force that the time for such a measure, if it had once been needed, was now clearly past. Mr. Bell urged the constitutional argument against the bill, as an interference with State rights, strongly, and with especial effect, from the fact that he is a staunch Republican. Mr. Sulloway administered a severe rebuke to the member who had endorsed the scheme on a plea that New Hampshire needed help for her schools, by the scathing remark that he "hoped we should not write over our doors that New Hampshire was willing to steal if she can get a part of the swag." Space will not permit further references to the discussion, which was animated and interesting throughout.

The case presented by the opponents of the resolution was so strong that its advocates saw that it was certain to be beaten upon its merits. They were constrained to change its character from a hearty endorsement to a cold "approval" of the Blair bill and to eliminate the clause instructing the Congressional delegation to support it. Even then it was only after the most diligent lobbying on the part of Mr. Blair's friends, and the most urgent appeals for support of the resolution on the ground that its defeat would be a personal rebuke to the Senator by his own State, that it was at last got through by the narrow margin of nine majority, the vote standing 136 to 127. The moral effect of the incident is of course practically equivalent to a defeat of the resolution.

The change in public opinion towards this measure in Mr. Blair's own State is symptomatic of a change throughout the country. It is now evident that the sober second thought of the nation has pronounced against the "Bill to Promote Mendicancy." It is to be wished that the matter might be dropped, for, as the *Texas School Journal* has pointed out, there can be "no possible effect of agitating the subject, other than that of giving to some communities in which public spirit is decidedly at a low ebb some pretext for postponing such action as they owe to their schools, through some vague hope that manna will somehow descend upon them from above."

The Blair Bill, Once More.

[From The Evening Post, December 31, 1887.]

The question whether the Federal Government ought to appropriate money from the national Treasury to aid in the support of schools in the States, for the especial benefit of the South, received a thorough discussion while the proposition was before the Forty-ninth Congress. The scheme had been urged for some years before, without ever being subjected to careful scrutiny, and the public had inclined to give it a thoughtless approval. But during the early months of 1886 THE EVENING POST presented facts and figures regarding the actual educational condition of the South, which caused former supporters of the project to change their views and resulted in a popular verdict against the bill, so that its failure to pass Congress was generally welcomed. The completeness of this revolution in public sentiment was shown in the most striking way possible by the action of the New Hampshire Legislature last summer. Mr. Blair appealed to the law-makers of his own State for a resolution of hearty endorsement to serve as a lever in the Fiftieth Congress. The resolution went to the Committee on National Affairs, two-thirds of whom were Republicans, but by a vote of nine to two the Committee reported "inexpedient to legislate," and the greatest efforts of Mr. Blair's friends were required to save him from the humiliation of an adverse majority in the Legislature, a cold "approval" being finally granted, only by a vote of 136 to 127.

As the New Hampshire Senator insists upon being beaten again, it is well to restate the considerations which were urged against his bill two years ago and to reinforce them with the new objections which have developed in the meantime. The plea for the measure is based upon the statistics of illiteracy furnished by the census of 1880, which showed that in a number of the Southern States nearly or quite half of the voters were unable to read and write. This fact is always presented by advocates of the bill as conclusive evidence that the South must have help from Washington; but, properly understood, it bears very different aspect. We have previously presented in detail figures which show that while in 1880 there were in the South 4,715,395 persons over ten years of age who could not write, 2,961,871, or about two-thirds of the whole number, were men and women over twenty-one years old, who would never

go to school if they had a chance. In other words, by far the greater part of the illiteracy which existed in the South in 1880 was hopeless, because by far the greater part of the illiterates were too old to attend school. It is absurd to say that the South in 1888 needs Federal aid to educate her children because in 1880 there were three million grown-up illiterates, born either slaves or "poor whites" of the slavery era.

The vital question is whether the South is now herself educating her children so that they will not be illiterates when they grow up. Advocates of the Blair bill always insist that it is not, because the South does not have as good schools as cities in the North have. THE EVENING POST has pointed out that the proper comparison is with thinly settled agricultural States, like Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, and has shown that illiteracy has been avoided in these New England States by a school system no better than that which many Southern States already have, and which the others will soon have at their present rate of progress. It was a great surprise to Northern people when we demonstrated that a number of Southern States keep their children in school more days in the year than New Hampshire does hers, but the truth is at last accepted even by New Hampshire, and the Concord *Monitor*, which is generally known as the "organ" of Mr. Blair's colleague, Senator Chandler, last April told its readers that "New Hampshire has less schooling than Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, or Missouri"—to which it should have added Texas and Kentucky, while Florida and two or three others are within a few days of the New Hampshire average. In like manner the *Monitor* might have shown that a larger percentage of the children of school age are enrolled in the public schools of some Southern States than in New Hampshire, while even South Carolina, which has the largest proportion of negroes, falls only a trifle behind New Hampshire in this respect.

The latest reports of the Superintendents of Education in the Southern States teem with proofs that outside help is not needed, a few of which must be cited. The average length of the school year in Virginia is already nearly six months, and the Superintendent recommends as perfectly practicable a further extension through the increase of local assessments. In West Virginia the average length is nearly five months, and the

Superintendent urges an increase, remarking that "the additional tax for two months would scarcely be felt." In Tennessee the Superintendent reported that "our public-school system is growing in favor with the people," and the Legislature justified his statement by more than doubling the school tax within a month after the Blair bill lapsed by the expiration of the Forty-ninth Congress, while the counties in their turn are doubling the local fund raised for education. In Alabama the Superintendent recites the growth of the system within four years from 4,624 schools with 177,428 pupils and a school fund of \$392,904 to 5,595 schools with 252,967 pupils and a school fund of \$523,353; he says that "our educational facilities must be increased to keep abreast with the material prosperity of the State," and adds that "all know there has been a gratifying increase in the resources of the State during the past few years, which requires an increase in the annual appropriation for schools." In Arkansas the Superintendent reports that "we are making rapid progress in our educational interests, and in a few more years Arkansas will stand side by side with the most favored of her sister States in the educational advantages she offers to her children"—a statement which is certainly warranted by the increase between 1883 and 1886 from 2,462 teachers, 112,233 pupils, and \$479,471 expenditure to 3,691 teachers, 175,985 pupils, and \$866,892 expenditure. In Georgia the Superintendent reported an increase within four years of pupils from 244,197 to 309,594, and of expenditure from \$498,533 to \$723,161, while he showed once more that a small increase in the tax, which could be laid "without unduly burdening the people," would enable the State to keep the schools in operation for six months of the year. In Florida the Superintendent reports that the amount expended upon schools has risen within four years from \$133,260 to \$400,000, while the school year falls only a few days short of New Hampshire and Maine. In Texas the Superintendent reports a steady and rapid advance in the cause of popular education, and insists that "the school term throughout the State should not be less than seven months."

Space will not permit a full presentation for each State of the wonderful progress which has been made in developing the school system of the South within the past

few years. The Blair bill was introduced in December, 1881, upon the ground that the South was so "impoverished by the war" that it could not raise any more money for schools than it was then raising, and that Federal aid ought to be granted for eight years. Six of the eight years have passed; the amount raised for schools has been largely increased in every State, and doubled or trebled in some, while the man who should now talk about the South being "impoverished by the war" would provoke the derision of every self-respecting Southerner. The rigorous test of time has been applied to the plausible pleas which were originally made for the passage of this bill, and their fallacy has been clearly exposed. The South has shown herself able to overcome the difficulties of the situation, and her success is another tribute to

American self-reliance. The most satisfactory feature of the matter is the fact that the opposition which has defeated the "Bill to Promote Mendicancy" was largely the opposition of self-respecting Southern men, like Senator Butler of South Carolina, who put the case against it most forcibly four years ago, when he said:

We ought to pause and reflect, for fear that in throwing this large amount of money into the States you will check the effort in those States to develop their own common-school system in their own way. Why, Mr. President, there is no success in life comparable to the success which attends individual effort, none so enduring, none so satisfactory. I would, therefore, be very cautious before I would appropriate money and put it with the States, the effect of which, I am afraid, would be, among others, to induce a very great many men, who are now earnestly struggling to build up their own local institutions, to put their hands in their pockets and say: "The general Government is going to educate everybody—what is the use of any man paying taxes for education?"



